



Arizona's Renewable Future

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Thursday, April 15, 2010

Thank you, Mike.

And, good morning, everyone!

Well, one thing's for sure: When you throw a party for renewables in Arizona ... EVERYBODY comes!

It's a huge thrill to see so many people here this morning.

If there's anyone left who still thinks this is NOT "for real," -- this crowd would change their mind!

Thank you for making time to be here today.

Special thanks to Jim Kenna and his colleagues at BLM for proving that a worthy goal, and the right people working toward it, can bring state and federal government together in a way that makes sense for Arizona.

Thanks, also, to President Crow and Todd Hardy and Paul Berman and countless others at ASU, for encouraging and embracing my pursuit of this event -- the work that it leads to, and the benefits it will produce in terms of new supplies of energy, new opportunities in transmission and the jobs! -- Jobs! -- Jobs! -- that go with them.

I really can't emphasize enough how great it is to have the University "at the ready" to help make obstacles go away -- whether it's through research on technology, legal assistance or global connections.

To a person, they have committed to carrying great ideas into game-changing realities.

You know, I've been Governor for well over a year, and I've spent most of that time dealing with a broken budget I inherited.

Too much of the time, I stand at a lectern like this and have to talk about declining revenues, reductions in staff and programs and the need for additional revenue.

What I don't get to talk about often enough is that the only sure way out of this mess, in the long run, is to grow and diversify the state's economy – find new ways to put Arizonans to work – and I believe renewable energy holds the greatest promise for doing that.

I look around the room and I know we can put aside partisan bickering over climate change in order to seize real opportunities.

Does that mean everyone is in lock step about climate initiatives or specific provisions in federal legislation? NO. But that's the nature of the beast – the push and pull of public policy.

What we do see -- as made clear by the size of this crowd -- is that WE ALL BELIEVE IN RENEWABLES.

The battles that are left – how much, how fast, what kind, mandates or markets -- can be resolved over the coming years and maybe even generations.

Let's face it, if we really believe in this, and WE DO, it is here FOREVER.

So, we've got time to work out our differences.

So, what IS the Governor of Arizona doing to help with renewables?

Well, let me list a few things:

First, I issued two executive orders, one which is being carried out today with this summit to make sure that Arizona government – or at least the agencies that I'm responsible for – make themselves available to the industry and do so with special zeal AND efficiency AND coordination.

I know you have heard and will hear more about that today from Mike and Maria and others.

By the way, if you haven't already heard – I now have my own renewable energy page where you can stay plugged in to what the agencies are doing.

In the second executive order, I have placed my Commerce Director, Don Cardon, in charge of figuring out what business tools, regulatory reform and taxing changes can be made so that Arizona springs to the top of the list for renewables.

His work, both within Commerce and the solar advisory group several of you are serving on as well, has begun the task of addressing these issues as aggressively as I have seen in nearly 30 years.

And for each of you assisting us, I want to thank you so much for doing so.

We truly are changing things!

And, while I am talking about change, let me add that just yesterday, I announced the Arizona Department of Commerce is being replaced by an authority governed by a private-sector led “Economic Advancement Board” dedicated to growing and diversifying our economy – a Board dedicated to creating and attracting more quality jobs for Arizonans.

We will now have a comprehensive approach – one for the 21st Century -- one yielding Focused Priorities -- Focused Investment – and Focused Efforts targeted on industries – such as solar, science, technology and aerospace and defense.

Don Carden continues as a guiding light in this reform, and he remains a vital asset in the preservation of the mission that the agency was created to fulfill.

Second, with regard to renewables -- I will always stand guard against BAD legislation.

AND I carry a veto stamp – AND I am not afraid to use it.

We already had one fire drill this session, but I immediately dispatched my Chief of Staff for Policy to kill the bill, which he helped do.

It wanted to repeal Arizona’s renewable energy standards. But it’s dead as a doornail now. RIGHT WHERE IT BELONGS.

I don’t know why anyone would push legislation that weakens Arizona with regard to its course on renewables when we have accomplished so much in such a short period of time.

These actions carry with them the very real threat of turning away from what we have become, which is THE location of choice for solar manufacturing companies worldwide.

We simply cannot allow our state to lose its solar focus when our partners at SunTech, Tower Automotive and hopefully Ying Li -- which will announce their decision concerning Arizona in the coming weeks -- have developed business plans based on who we have demonstrated ourselves to be ... which is THE world leader in solar energy.

Believe me, I take this very seriously and will not allow the loss of this focus to occur; personally, within my administration, OR even within the Legislature.

The third thing I am doing is launching a contest to create a logo for Arizona that captures the essence of why Arizona is THE place for renewables.

It will be done through the Arizona Department of Commerce, so be on the lookout for how to get involved.

The contest will be open to everyone from kindergarten to Madison Avenue. The winner will receive credit on all future marketing materials, the admiration of their peers and the public, bonus points in heaven, BUT ABSOLUTELY NO MONEY. You know the budget ...

Fourth, I have asked the cast and crew of the Arizona State Land Department to do three things that are absolutely essential to our success in this industry:

-- A. Work with BLM, Game and Fish, ASU, the Corporation Commission, and other agencies to create the definitive maps of Arizona, both in terms of attractive generation sites and in terms of viable transmission corridors.

-- B. Work with other agencies to develop a flow chart WITH AN INITIAL SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT WITHIN ARIZONA STATE GOVERNMENT that can be provided to renewable energy enthusiasts, businesses and individuals, that diagrams who does what in Arizona in terms of promotion, funding, siting, transmitting, permitting, regulating and buying renewable energy. And...

-- C. Work inside and outside the Land Department to move renewable applications forward. I know they already do this because they are enthusiastic landlords for renewables, but let's hope we can do it even faster by focusing and working together. You'll hear more about this during one of the panels.

Fifth -- and final point -- many in this room know that the biggest challenge we have in this state is inadequate transmission capacity.

Yes, finding capital is tough.

Yes, getting a power purchase agreement is tough.

But the REALLY tough part is knowing that you can get your kilowatts from "here to there."

So . Look for an announcement that proposes significant relief from this shortcoming SOON.... I promise I'm working hard on it.

Let me add here, that The Arizona Comeback began in earnest when I fought for -- and won -- thanks to the help of courageous members of both parties in the State Senate

and the State House – the right of the VOTERS to decide whether to raise the state sales tax by 1 percent over the next three years.

I've NEVER voted to raise taxes in my entire career. Not once in 28 years in public service. Not one time!

But, I've learned one thing above all else: Doing the RIGHT thing, almost always means doing the HARD thing.

That's how I feel about Proposition 100. As hard as it is to do, I will be a "YES" vote come Election Day.

I'm voting "YES" because it's the right thing to do, and I strongly encourage you to vote "YES" as well.

IF we are to preserve the core functions of the Arizona we all love ...

-- IF we want to keep funding Arizona's K-12 education system at reasonable levels to keep class sizes manageable so teachers have time to spend with students to help them learn ...

– IF we want to help our universities and community colleges – facing tuition increases of 15, 18, and 20 percent ...

– IF we want to keep felons locked up ...

-- and IF we want to aid Arizona's poorest families with the help they desperately need ... then Proposition 100 MUST pass!

Without the revenue that a "YES" vote will bring, we will need to cut yet another billion dollars. Without it, education funding -- already at 2006 levels -- will be set back by at least 10 years and hundreds of millions of dollars.

I emphasize, this is a TEMPORARY tax.

It will start on June 1st of this year, and come to a DEAD STOP at the end of the day on May 31, 2013 -- when it is automatically repealed from the law books.

This is not a cure-all, but the tax will get us through until revenues recover, so that education does not bear the brunt of the downturn.

Now, it is self evident that we live in a sunny place. And we know that we can capture our abundant sunshine and use it to supplement and someday even replace other energy supplies.

But having the sunshine and having the technology to harness it is only part of the story. The rest of the story has yet to be written. But, I am committed to seeing that it is written with Arizona as the Solar Capitol of the World.

The great news, as my friend Kris Mayes always says, is that Arizona already is recognized as one of the best places to engage in renewables.

We've earned that reputation by keeping regulation reasonable, by watching our tax structure, and by having an underlying system that functions well – one that is stable, predictable, and reliable. We don't read much about that, but industry insiders will tell you Arizona is already ahead of the game.

Still, we can always do better. Our immediate goal has got to be to take our natural assets and make even more of them by really AMPING UP their development and production and use.

That's what makes this event and your presence here today so promising.

So let's GET IT DONE TOGETHER!

Thank you very much.